

Fowl Feathered Review



No 190



Fowl Feathered Review 190 (Now in Fun Size)

Fowl Feathered Review is a quarterly, a disordered artifact of the human impulse to categorize and consume the ephemeral. Produced by the Springwound Mammoth Pancake Coalition—an entity distinct from its waffle-centric counterpart—it is birthed under the Fowlpox Press imprint. Virgil Kay, its editor, presides over this enterprise from a paper canoe adrift on the Passagassawakeag, a river of dubious depth and even more dubious inhabitants. Surrounded by featherheads and their aquatic card games, Kay's reign is absolute, his word the final arbiter in the transformation of boastful souls into doormats. Layout and visual conceits are the province of Cookie Granola, while melodrama and histrionics fall under the purview of Childe Harold. Silent Bill, in his characteristically taciturn manner, provides necessary pauses. The review's structural integrity, or lack thereof, is the domain of Unkie Bob, whose talents extend to the mitigation of typographical errors and the prevention of electrical conflagrations. Everett Enótita serves as Kay's indispensable amanuensis, and the Ecum Secum Literary Brain Trust, in a gesture of dubious beneficence, offers nominal financial support. Printed upon the verdant expanse of Bald Porcupine Island, and laced with the enigmatic Kraa, a bioengineered culinary enigma, the Fowl Feathered Review remains a testament to human ingenuity, or perhaps merely a symptom of cultural decline. ISSN: 1929-7238.

"I am an observer of life, a non-participant who takes no sides. I am in the regimented society, but not of it."

--Moondog, The Viking of 6th Avenue



Return Policy:

If this magazine does not meet your expectations,
please return it to us in its original condition
for a full refund, minus the cost of enlightenment.

Submissions



Fowlpox Press: A Submission Guide for the Determined (or Deluded) To the Aspiring Artist (or Sandwich Enthusiast):

1. **Craft (or Culinary Construct):** 2-227 poems, a numerical range that hints at both ambition and a troubling lack of self-editing, may find their way to our digital doorstep (fowlpoxpress@mail2poet.com). Alternatively, for the visually inclined, paintings numbered 2-953 (a prolific career, or perhaps a basement overflowing with forgotten canvases?) are welcome. We are also, inexplicably, open to submissions of twelve-inch sandwiches.
2. **The Gatekeeper:** Address your offerings to Virgil Kay, Editor. In possession of remarkably discerning taste, or so he believes, Virgil is a rooster of some renown, a creature of instinct and inexplicable confidence. His title, "China Wok Habitue," suggests a broader palate than one might expect from a bird, though it's more likely a testament to the local takeout joint's generous portions. (**Please note:** Include a bio, a desperate plea for recognition that will likely join the unread masses in the digital purgatory of our slush pile.)
3. **Format:** Poems, those valiant attempts at capturing the human experience in meter and rhyme, should be attached in a Word document or PDF. Paintings, windows into your soul (or a weekend spent with Bob Ross reruns), must be submitted in JPEG, TIFF, or a format our aging technology can comprehend. Jokes, if they exist, should be delivered in MP3 format. We are, alas, not equipped to handle the nuanced art of the live performance. Sandwiches, a curious offering in the realm of artistic expression, require clear plastic wrapping and a small packet of Kewpie Mayonnaise. (**Pro-tip:** The Kewpie packaging is, undeniably, a work of art in its own right, and we encourage you to admire it before consumption.)
4. **The Cycle Continues:** We exist in a perpetual state of acceptance and rejection. A Sisyphean task, some might say. We receive submissions 365 days a year, a testament to the relentless hope, or perhaps blissful ignorance, of aspiring artists. However, with a heavy heart (and a full crop), we must inform you that rejections also occur 365 days a year.
5. **The Sandwiches:** Ah, the sandwiches. These, unlike your artistic endeavors, find a permanent home within our editorial sanctum. Virgil, in his infinite wisdom, has determined that a diet rich in carbohydrates is essential for maintaining his regal demeanor.
6. **Leap Year Follies:** Leap years, those extra days gifted by the whims of the calendar, offer no reprieve. Aspiring poets, it seems, are undeterred by such temporal anomalies. You are, however, cordially invited to "take a flying leap" during these additional 24 hours.

Please proceed with caution. Artistic aspirations are a delicate dance, and the path to publication is littered with the fallen hopes of countless dreamers. But hey, maybe your sandwich is killer. Just remember, Kewpie or bust.

[Fowl Feathered Review | Poets & Writers \(pw.org\)](http://FowlFeatheredReview.com)

“Non ígnora malí, míserís succurrere díscó.”

– Virgíl, The Aeneíd

Why Is the Introduction.

Used to run after you

Scamper

A red-backed chipmunk

Or lithe as a salamander

(Not the ground creature

But the elemental;

Sulphur & fire).

Always asking Why, how

To compass

Piano octaves, middle C

Tick

Tick tucked in my tartan

Skirt pocket,

Held near

My

Hip

As mother balanced the newborn.

But I'm neither creature of water

3 POEMS

by

CAROLYN

SPRYGLEY-

MOORE

FROM HER

FORTHCOMING

BOOK,

*WATCHING THE
POTOMAC BURN,*

TO BE PUBLISHED

THIS YEAR BY

KUNG FU

TREACHERY

PRESS

Nor creature of fire —

Just a woman, blood red & purple

Full of pressed grapes & owls

Nearing the cusp

The worn blue shoe, straps

Breaking

In a honey desert sand

Don't Restrain Me.

You & I

Mount steps to

Mount the shine of archaeological

Quests

Defining that light

 Moon-halo

 We seek &

You believe (sometimes

I have such

Visions too)

6 miles away

Fixed & pulsating

Trickster astronomer

What is truth, Bethlehem? –. More

Than one chosen culture,

Darkness carves

 Many faces

The tree-ring center

The metro token

Totem

Babe

& touching my chin

With your

Goatee & the ripe mouth hidden

You reached

Flooding my trees

With birds

Cresting

I can see

Sutures disarming

Anonymous wound

Pink

Eyeshadow Layered..

1

Pink shadows

Layered,

Marking our

Faces

There's the voluptuous

Wind &

Solitude

Of youth

Eyes

Mildly

Yelping, waiting

For something's reflection (if

Not the original) a tunnel

Damp underground train

Where futuristic monster rats nibble

Caviar

Of New Manhattan

Where

Causes are cargo, ballast & prop – yet

Picture books lean in our

Window

Thing One

ThingTwo

Banned

(Seuss cadences, wakes of river)

– yet carry –

2

How is it

An imaginary county

An arsonist's bible.

Hollywood

Sign

Eroding

As do shorelines & mountains,

Cary Grant

& Grace

Only

Superimposed

Hallucinations

& the service attendants

& pizza dough tossers

Sell potions

In a world of desire

So strange

So changed —

Like red roses

Suddenly purple as hyacinth

In the soup aisle

& startled

People

Sit at the potter's wheel

Raise vases as a red clay spins

Glazed bright as elephant eyes

Omniscient

Utterly redeemed

3

How is it

The stink of lit

Sulphur

Evokes

Fireplace hearths of festival

Ghosting

The heartbeat

Over & over

Again?

4

Instinct

Impulse

5

Offer a white-gloved hand – white

Satin just to

The elbow –

Set for the fabled Ball,

Twirling tango

As the lamp-houses

Wink

& on the knoll of

That

Bridge

The assassins

No longer stalk

No longer linger

& the goats play

Nursing

The new





THE HANGAR'S HEART, THE PARROT'S PROPHECY

THE HANGAR'S HEART, THE PARROT'S PROPHECY

By Milt Follows

In the belly of the great hangar, a place where the air itself was a tapestry woven from the ghosts of fuel and forgotten battles, Marcus Klever, the silent sentinel of the concrete floor, moved with the grace of a man whose very existence was a quiet defiance. His mop, a tireless pendulum, carved a gleaming path through the grime, a solitary hymn echoing in that cathedral of cold steel. Shadows, long and lean, stretched from dormant engines and wings that had once torn the sky, whispering tales of old wars and repairs. The floor beneath him, a mosaic of grease and grit, bore the weight of ages, each crack a fissure in the earth's memory, a testament to time's slow, unyielding erosion. Marcus measured his life in the groans of the hangar, his steps a soft rebellion against the encroaching void.

Within the small antechamber, a humble shrine to the everyday, the microwave hummed a low, hypnotic tune. Its glass door glowed with the promise of warmth, revealing within a steaming bowl of chili – an alchemy of meat and beans, a relic of comfort in a world unmoored. Every thirty seconds, Marcus, with the precision of a clockmaker, turned the container, a ritual as automatic as breathing, each rotation a small, defiant act against the chill that seeped into the very bones of the hangar. The scent, rich and sweet, rose like a forgotten melody, a Proustian echo of a home that had long since dissolved into the dust of forgotten routines. A flicker of a smile, a private joke shared only with the silence, danced beneath his yellow hazmat hood.

At the unholy hour of 3 AM, the stairwell transformed into a stage for the absurd, a cruel trick of fate. An invisible, spiteful leak had slicked the steps with a treacherous film, a

betrayal of the unseen. Marcus, still wielding his mop with the precision of a surgeon, slipped – a sudden, involuntary surrender to gravity's cold embrace. The fall was a blur of concrete and railing, a crescendo of impact that left him sprawled, a broken silhouette bathed in the stark glow of emergency lights. No one saw. No one heard. The vast hangar swallowed him whole, a forgotten parenthesis in the relentless rhythm of the night.

The denial letter arrived, as if summoned by the very air of indifference that permeated the world. Its crisp, unforgiving words formed a sieve through which all compassion had been ruthlessly filtered away. Marcus, confined to his bed, found an unexpected solace in the vibrant clatter of a parrot's wings. Skipper, a flash of emerald green and burnished gold, squawked with indignant fury, his voice sharp and jagged: "Claim denied! Too bad, so sad!" The phrase, a Dadaist provocation against the unfeeling machinery of the world, became his mantra, a defiant cry in the face of his misfortune.

Weeks later, Marcus returned, a testament to an unbroken spirit, though his limp spoke of the trial he'd endured. Perched upon his cart, like some absurd prophet, was Skipper. The parrot's cries, a Gonzo chorus in that world of sterile efficiency, echoed through the hangar, a vibrant counterpoint to the low hum of engines. The night crew, hushed and wide-eyed, whispered of the peculiar bird, of the quiet man who transformed chili into a sacrament, and of the fall that had, in their telling, already begun to blossom into a fable.

Then came the elevator, a gleaming trap of steel and pride. It stalled abruptly between floors, its gears grinding like the teeth of some ancient, slumbering beast. Inside this gilded cage, trapped with their carefully guarded secrets, were Mr. Sterling, his cologne a mask of forced control, and Ms. Albright, her ambition a quiet, simmering fire. The intercom crackled, a fragile lifeline snatched from the void. Marcus, ever so calmly

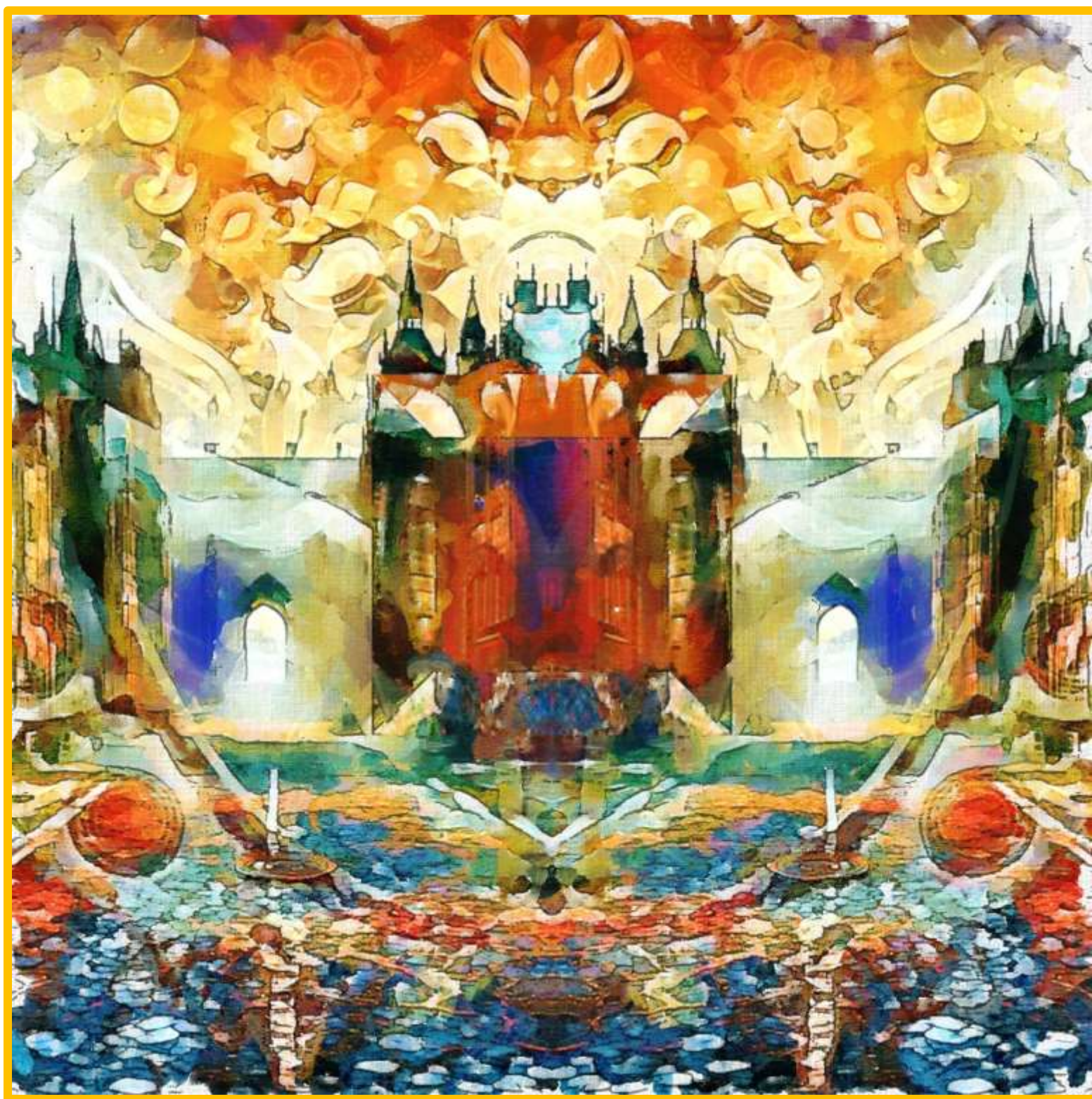
adjusting his suit, lifted the receiver – only to be met by Skipper's voice, sharp and unyielding, piercing the sudden silence.

"Claim denied! Too bad, so sad!"

The elevator plummeted, a requiem of metal and fate, its descent a brutal harmony. The entire hangar trembled, holding a collective breath. Above, like a fragment from a Nouveau Roman, the illicit affair of Sterling and Albright began to unravel in a symphony of whispers and glances. Below, amidst the chaos, Marcus sat, his chili container slowly rotating, a small, steady sun in the encroaching darkness. The air, thick with the scent of spice and possibility, hinted at a world where the mundane and the miraculous danced in an inevitable tango.

The hangar breathed once more, its steel bones groaning, its shadows shifting. Marcus resumed his rhythmic mopping, his steps a slow, deliberate cadence. He was a man who had learned to find meaning in the cracks, in the unspoken, in the endless, metamorphic march of the night.





Tremolo

By Lucerte Carpentier

Vignette 1: The Train Car

The air smells of grease and wool, diesel exhaust clinging to the edges. Paisley's fingers trace the grain of the wooden seat, her reflection fractured in the window—a smudge of red coat, a flash of pale face. Two seats down, the boy's harmonica is a silver sliver, caught in the dim light. Its notes spiral, layered, as if the train itself is breathing them out. The rhythm stutters, then swells, a symphony of echoes. Outside, the landscape blurs—evergreens, a rusted signal box, a barn collapsing in slow motion. The harmonica's wail becomes a spire, then a gate, then a castle. Paisley blinks. The castle stays.

Vignette 2: The Castle

Molten gold drips from turrets that pierce a sky bruised with twilight. The stone is rough-hewn, each block a memory she doesn't own. Gargoyles leer, their wings half-carved, tools still embedded in stone. A clock face, frozen at 3:17, ticks silently. Inside, the air tastes of lime blossom tea and dust. A stained-glass window casts fractured light on a mosaic floor—blues and oranges, like the harbor her grandfather painted. The harmonica's echo lingers, a thread tying this place to the train, to her.

Vignette 3: The Timetable

"Maine Central April 1956
Portland to Bangor: 8 trains daily.
Rockland: 3 trains. Calais: 1."

The paper is thin, the ink smudged where her thumb rests. Paisley stares at the words *Bar Harbor*, imagines fourteen sleeping cars stretching like a silver snake. The boy's music stops. The train lurches. The timetable slips from her hands, flutters to the floor. A boot steps on it—the conductor's, scuffed and cracked. He doesn't notice.

Vignette 4: The Water

The castle's moat is not water but memory. Ripples form, dissolve, reform. A child's laugh, a door slamming, the scent of hawthorn. Paisley kneels, her reflection shattered. The harmonica's notes return, distorted now, underwater. She dips her fingers in. The liquid is cold, viscous, like time. A pearl surfaces, then sinks. She remembers a necklace breaking, pearls rolling under a couch. But whose memory is it? Hers? The boy's? The castle's?

Vignette 5: The Ajar Door

The train slows. The harmonica falls silent. Paisley's coat is wrinkled, her breath visible in the chill. The boy is gone. His seat is empty, the silver harmonica left behind. She picks it up. It's warm, as if still played. Outside, the station is a blur of yellow light and shadows. A door stands ajar in the castle—no, in the train car. No, in her mind. She steps off the train. The harmonica's echo fades, but the castle remains, a palimpsest on her retina.

Cut to Black.

The timetable lies crumpled, half-hidden under a seat. The harmonica's silver gleams in Paisley's hand. The castle's clock strikes 3:17. The train pulls away, leaving only the echo of a note, a question: *Was it ever real?*

End Mid-Thought.



Oil as Sperm

By Terrible Tuesday

I wasn't conceived

I was a collab

Thrown together by starving artists

At the Gowanus Memorial Artyard—

ground zero for anarchists and the radically amended

Back in the 1980s

Warhol was there

Lots of big names

I came out freak show paper maché

Painted with Bubonic plague

And released in Central Park

To busk for a living

I slept underground

Reemerged in the early aughts
As a triumphant mess
And now I give sold-out Ted Talks
In Bellevue's psych.





To let is to live

BY MARTY BENTON

Let every potentate abdicate posthaste

Let every proletariat laureate litigate his fawning folderol

Let every middling minx of a mayor succumb to the weight of his own bum

Let every excessive picket in the high fence commence to be broken for kindling

Let every commingling comeuppance be pummeled with lemon grass and litany



NEIGHBORHOOD NIGHTMARE: DOLLS, DOG, AND DARK DEEDS

BY DENNY KELLY

Now, listen up, you hep cats and keen dolls, 'cause in the peculiarly tinted light of a late August afternoon – which, let me tell ya, was paintin' the sky like a sad trombone solo – a tableau of unconscionable cruelty did indeed unfold. Like a bad dream out of a nickelodeon, only nastier. The cobblestone streets, bless their ancient, grumbling hearts, they weren't just whisperin' forgotten lores, no sir. They were hummin' a mournful tune, a low, bluesy moan about the persistent, almost geological, malevolence that sometimes just oozes outta the cracks in this crazy asphalt jungle. Two eight-year-old boys, see?

Their mugs hitherto as innocent as a freshly baked challah, were now a canvas smeared with the shadows of a macabre curiosity, a real freak of nature, if you ask me. Unbefitting their tender years, by golly. They had, with an almost preternatural cunning, stumbled upon the clandestine treasure trove of their six-year-old neighbor, a collection of dolls meticulously amassed in a heart-wrenching display of childhood solace. The dolls, poor little ragamuffins, with their vacant glass eyes and limp fabric limbs, they just sat there, silent as a stoop on a Sunday, bearing witness to the tumultuous world beyond their fragile, imagined prison. A world wherein the whispers of an adult's harsh narratives were simply a backdrop to the unfolding scene, a background hum in this crazy asphalt jungle. You dig it? The insidious potency of unchecked impulses. It ain't just history, bub, it's a live wire.

Their names? Aw, fuhgeddaboutit, lost to the capricious whims of a fickle memory, like a dropped dime down a sewer grate. A curious blend, they were, of the angelic and the profane – a reflection most unsettling, if you ask this hack, of the duality that would soon, KA-BLAMMO!, unravel before the trembling eyes of the girl. Her name, too, was but a fading echo, like the last note of a forgotten record, in the labyrinth of time's remorseless passage. Her sobs, and lemme tell ya, they were a real heartbreaker, constituted the mournful aria of a soul too young, perchance, to comprehend the sheer capriciousness of fate that had cast her as the tragic protagonist in a grim spectacle, orchestrated by the callous hands of destiny and the perverse whims of her two young tormentors. A profound disquietude permeated the very air, thick as a shroud. It was the kind of scene that'd make a streetcar groan louder than usual, a real vibration of wrongness.

The dolls, once a bastion of her imagined realm, a sanctuary of cotton and lace, were now torn asunder with a chilling lack of compunction by the very hands that had, in moments past, cradled them in feigned affection. The boys' laughter, a cacophony of malicious delight, resonated through the oppressive stillness of the afternoon, a stark and chilling contrast to the girl's wailing, which grew more feral, more guttural, with each dismembered limb. The act. It wasn't just some childish mischief, no sir. It was, rather, a bizarre and deeply unsettling exorcism of the demons that lurked in the recesses of their nascent minds. The sickly sweet odor of decay, though imperceptible, seemed to cling to the very lace curtains of the quaint parlour, a real funk that you could almost smell, even if you couldn't.

The grandmother, a stoic sentinel of the old world, a dame of formidable resolve, had hitherto regaled them with narratives of her own youth—a period of stark austerity and unrelenting discipline, where joy was a trespasser upon the precarious tightrope of survival. Her words, a tapestry woven from threads of horror and resilience, were part of the tapestry of their lives, yet their influence on the boys' unfolding cruelty was merely that of a distant echo, not a guiding hand. You see, Mac? It's easy to look back and say, "Well, *she* had it rough," but that ain't no license to make someone *else* suffer. That's just makin' a bigger mess.

And then, as if to add a final, grotesque flourish to their ghastly symphony, the boys, with a chilling deliberation, unleashed their dog. This creature, whose loyalty was as boundless as its savagery was unpredictable, was a denizen of the streets, a stray domesticated in name only, its instincts honed by the raw lawlessness of the urban jungle. The dog, sensing the frenetic, almost feverish energy of its young masters, descended upon the girl with a fervour that quite belied its modest size—a furious whirlwind of teeth and fur that seemed to have materialized from the darkest corner of a nightmare. A primal, guttural growl vibrated through the quaint August air. The whole scene, it was like something out of a bad dream, a real madness, a boing! of pure terror.

The girl's cries grew more desperate, piercing the genteel calm, as the dog's frenzy mounted. The very fabric of reality seemed to stretch and distort around her tiny, trembling frame, like a rubber hose cartoon character gettin' squeezed. The dolls lay scattered, their once vibrant garments now a morbid confetti, a silent testament to innocence irrevocably lost. The scene was a macabre dance of chaos and cruelty, a surreal painting that would have caused even the most jaded of gonzo artists to weep for the futility of capturing such a moment on canvas. A shimmering of scales, though unseen, seemed to ripple across the very air, zwoop!, like a phantom fish on the dry land.

Yet. When the dust of that wretched afternoon did settle, and the adults, like a flock of indignant vultures, descended upon the crime scene, eager to pick at the bones of justice, a most curious and troubling pronouncement was made: the boys were found to be innocent. Can you dig it, fella? The court of public opinion, swayed by the poignant, tearful recounting of their grandmother's profound tragedies, chose to see in them not the culprits, but rather the unfortunate victims of a narrative that, while deeply sad, wasn't directly responsible for their actions. It was a societal folly, an unfortunate bending of the moral compass. The dog, a silent, bewildered accomplice, bore the brunt of the blame, its eyes reflecting the profound confusion and horror of a creature caught in a world it could never truly comprehend. The responsibility, one might argue, shifted like shadows in a dimly lit chamber. They pinned it on the mutt, see, because it was easier than facing the ugly truth that kids, even kids from a tough past, can still choose wrong. Ain't no thing about your background that makes it okay to break another kid's world.

The girl, her world shattered by the brutal jaws of the beast, retreated into the quiet, almost ethereal, sanctum of her mind. Her sobs echoed through the corridors of memory like a ghostly melody, a lament for what had been irrevocably taken. Her dolls, now a grim reminder of a lost innocence, were consigned to the earth, buried in the backyard beneath a small cairn of forgotten toys – a silent vigil to the capricious whims of fate and the unspeakable acts that lay hidden beneath the veneer of suburban tranquility. A sad, sad song, a real blues with a beat, even if nobody else heard it.

The neighbourhood, once a bastion of decorous order, now pulsed with a subtle undercurrent of unease, a palpable sense that the very fabric of reality had been rent asunder and crudely stitched back together with the jagged threads of a darker truth. The boys, as is the way of the world, grew to manhood, their innocence forever tainted by the indelible shadow of that fateful day. Their hearts became a perpetual battleground, wherein the forces of darkness and light, once unleashed within them, wrestled for dominion.

The girl, however, she was a swell dame. She grew stronger. Her spirit, one observes, was forged in the crucible of tragedy. Her eyes, once brimming with the tears of sorrow, now gleamed with the steely resolve of resilience. She moved through the world with the silent grace of a sentinel, her heart a quiet bastion of hope in a world where the lines between innocence and cruelty had, alas, grown ever more indistinct. She learned that even if the world gives you a rough break, you don't gotta pass that grief along. That's the real righteous move, see?

The grandmother, her tales of yore now a cautionary legend whispered in hushed tones, watched from the sidelines. Her face, a portrait of profound regret and belated understanding, betrayed the heavy burden of her past. She knew, with a certainty that chilled her to the bone, that the events of that day were a complex tragedy, and her stories, while part of their lives, were not the direct catalyst for the boys' choices. She understood that accountability for their actions lay squarely with them, a cycle that would continue to echo through the lives of her descendants like the fading, mournful notes of a melody that had once been so sweet.

The years rolled on like the pages of a forgotten, water-damaged book. The story of the dolls and the dog became a distant murmur, a mere whisper in the annals of a neighbourhood that had, perhaps, seen too much and remembered too little. But the girl, now a woman of quiet strength, never forgot. She carried the burden of that day with her, not as a weight, but as a talisman of resilience that reminded her of the enduring power of love, the profound fragility of innocence, and the boundless, often terrifying, depths of the human soul.





THE IMPROBABLE ALLURE OF A DEAD SKUNK IN A BONNET BY WASSILY W. WALWORTH

- A. *"City Council Debates Zoning Variance"; "Partly Cloudy with a 30% Chance of Existential Dread"; "Lost: One Tortoiseshell Cat, Answers to the name 'Systemic Collapse'"*
- B. *"Sculpt," "Define," "Indulge," "Unleash Your Inner Glow," "A Scent of Unattainable Memories."*
- C. *"The principle of quantum superposition states...," "During the phloem loading process...," "To troubleshoot, first ensure the device is unplugged from its primary power source."*
- D. *"Just Do It.," "Think Different.," "Limited Time Offer!," "Our Commitment to Stakeholder Value."*
- E. *"...buy milk, bread, toilet paper, existential dread repellent...," "Your car's extended warranty is about to expire."*
- F. *"CRASH! The quantum entanglement of subatomic particles defies classical observation."*
- G. *"The cephalopod possesses a highly developed nervous system."*
- H. *"Villainy, once unleashed, knows no bounds!"*
- I. *"A shiver of pure dread crawled up his spine, cold as a graveyard slab."*
- J. *"The shadow of his fate, an inscrutable specter, clung to him still."*
- K. *"Ensure all connections are firmly seated before proceeding."*
- L. *"Alien Love Child Found in Supermarket!"*
- M. *"The post-structuralist paradigm interrogates the inherent biases of semiotic representation."*

A blue jay, see, a regular street corner sage with eyes like polished dimes, was perched on the sill of the Grand Aviary of Atheria. He wasn't lookin' for handouts, no sir. He was

just diggin' the scene, takin' it all in, this whole Parliament of the Poultry palaver—a swell bunch of feathered philosophers tryin' to move a birdcage big as a getaway car. LOST: ONE ANTIQUE BIRD CAGE, ANSWERS TO "THE UNWIELDY." REWARD IF FOUND BEFORE UNIVERSE UNRAVELS.

Now, listen up, you hep cats and keen dolls, 'cause the algorithm, that slick prognosticator of doom and delayed luncheons, had piped up with a mad 98.7% certainty that the mildew on some schnook named Alejandro's spectacles—yeah, you heard right, the *mildew*—was gonna send the whole shebang, the cosmic kettle and caboodle, into a tailspin. PARTLY CLOUDY WITH A 30% CHANCE OF EXISTENTIAL DREAD. *My corns tell me it's gonna be a long day.*

The Pretzel Bakers of Budapest:
Oh, the folly of fowl, in their feathered conceit!
To move what is heavy, with barely two feet!
The cage, it looms large, a metallic decree,
While fate, like a worm, wriggles wild and free!

Temujin Featherbottom III, the head honcho of the hen house, a real spiffy bird with a monocle perched like a precious pearl on his comb, was screamin' about "strategic deployment" of repurposed juggling pins. Juggling pins, son! To move a cage that looked like it'd been hauled out of some defunct state circus, probably where they kept the alien love child. *The principle of quantum superposition states... this cage ain't goin' nowhere without a fight, see?*

Sofia, a Silkie, bless her fluffy heart, was the designated "mover." She had the spirit, natch, but her brain for straight lines was like a pretzel—all twists and turns. Her moves were spontaneous jazz improvisations, not the controlled translocation Temujin was hollerin' about. UNLEASH YOUR INNER GLOW. SCULPT. DEFINE. She was tryin' to sculpt a path, but it was lookin' more like a demolition derby.

Then, outta the slut-wool-filled gloom, lookin' like a bad dream from a pulp novel, comes El Fuego, the chili vendor, his gas mask makin' him sound like a leaky faucet. "Anyone

for a bowl of my volcanic vindaloo?" he hissed. ENSURE ALL CONNECTIONS ARE FIRMLY SEATED BEFORE PROCEEDING. He pushed his rickety cart, bubblin' pots of fire on wheels. *A shiver of pure dread crawled up his spine, cold as a graveyard slab.*

Sofia, with the enthusiasm of a kid in a candy store, tried to wedge a clown shoe—a real whopper, mind you—into a slot clearly meant for somethin' dainty. A SHOE FOR A SLOT, A MOST ILL-FATED CHOICE! KRAK! The cage shuddered, a groan like a dying saxophone. *The cephalopod possesses a highly developed nervous system, but this birdcage had none!*

The Pretzel Bakers of Budapest:
A shoe for a slot, a most ill-fated choice!
The grinding of metal, a sorrowful voice!
The structure now shudders, a trembling despair,
As chaos unfurls on the dust-laden air!

Anya, the King Pigeon, the official chronicler of this glorious folly, let out a mournful coo. That coo, you dig, made Sofia flinch, and badoomph! The juggling pins went splish-splash into a thousand brightly colored pieces. OUR COMMITMENT TO STAKEHOLDER VALUE IS CRUMBLING.

Then, the door creaked open, like a ghost from a Fleischer cartoon, and in shuffles a bewildered old broad. Floral dress askew, lookin' for bingo cards, and cradlin' a dead skunk in a baby bonnet. LOST: ONE SKUNK, ANSWERS TO "STINKY." The smell of chili and skunk, lemme tell ya, was a scent of unattainable memories, a real funk that made your eyeballs water. IS YOUR NEIGHBOR A MARTIAN SPY?

Temujin, bless his little feathery heart, screeched about "re-establish the requisite biomechanical equilibrium." Sofia, bless her big heart, thought he meant a vigorous shove. WHOMP! The cage lurched, like a boing! spring, nearly takin' out a stack of antique feather dusters. Dust motes danced in the weak sunlight, lookin' like tiny, panicked spirits.

The Pretzel Bakers of Budapest:

Oh, counter-rotation, a concept so grand!
But brute force applied, by a feathered hand!
The cage spins and crashes, a comical spree,
While logic and order take flight and flee!

"My dear Sofia," Temujin huffed, his monocle doin' a jitterbug down his beak, "your application of 'counter-rotational force' was undeniably... spirited, but it lacked the nuanced precision!" He sputtered, "Forward momentum! A vulgar term! We strive for controlled translocation, not brute force! The very essence of avian engineering hinges upon a delicate interplay of vectors and torques!" *I'm just a humble bug, see, but even I know that ain't how you move a house.*

El Fuego, behind his mask, sounded like a broken record. "Sometimes, you just gotta hit it with a bigger spoon. Or, in this case, a bigger shoe." TO TROUBLESHOOT, FIRST ENSURE THE DEVICE IS UNPLUGGED FROM ITS PRIMARY POWER SOURCE. Anya, the melancholy chronicler, scribbled on her parchment: *"The endeavor continues, yet the trajectory remains decidedly off-kilter. A lamentable spectacle, echoing the fleeting nature of all grand designs."* THE SHADOW OF HIS FATE, AN INSCRUTABLE SPECTER, CLUNG TO HIM STILL.

Sofia, after a moment of deep contemplation (or maybe just hummin' a Gregorian polka), started gatherin' the broken juggling pins, arrangin' 'em in a spiral. "Perhaps," she murmured, "a new form of avian geometry is emerging." THE POST-STRUCTURALIST PARADIGM INTERROGATES THE INHERENT BIASES OF SEMIOTIC REPRESENTATION.

The grandma, bless her cotton socks, started strokin' the skunk. "Such a good boy, stinky... he always loved a good polka." *Your car's extended warranty is about to expire, honey, and this skunk ain't gonna last forever.*

Temujin, strokin' his chin with a claw, the monocle still slippin', looked at the spiral. It echoed the Fibonacci sequence, it mocked stability. "Indeed," he said, a flicker in his eye, a hint of something unsettling. "Perhaps." *The very air in this joint was thick with the unexpected.*

The Pretzel Bakers of Budapest:
The spiral of chaos, a pattern defined!
In the dust and the feathers, a new truth enshrined!
For even in folly, a strange beauty gleams,
As the Parliament ponders impossible dreams!

The Grand Aviary, believe it or not, was still largely intact. Just a scattering of broken thimbles, and that one dented birdcage, lookin' like it lost a fight with a fleet of mad gorillas. The committee, tired as a hobo after a cross-country train ride, adjourned for tea. They were talkin' about miniature catapults now, you kiddin' me, bub? The algorithm, that stoic prophet of indigestion, still predicted a delayed luncheon, steady as a rock at 98.7%. And the blue jay on the windowsill, he watched, then promptly regurgitated a shiny button. It wasn't a pronouncement, fella. It was just... the situation. JUST DO IT.

El Fuego, the culinary alchemist of despair, offered his final pitch. "Anyone for a lukewarm cup of despair, with a side of extra hot sauce? Guaranteed to make you forget your troubles, or at least give you new ones." The grandma, hummin' along, asked, "Is this where they keep the good cookies?" "...*buy milk, bread, toilet paper, existential dread repellent...*" This joint, see, was a real trip, a righteous madness. And I, your humble narrator, was just tryin' to keep my press pass from melting.





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